

# Wilderness Management— A Five-Year Action Program







# Wilderness Management—

## A FIVE-YEAR ACTION PROGRAM



In 1984 the National Wilderness Preservation System encompassed 80 million acres of Federal Land. By 1990 the Wilderness System conceivably could cover 100 million acres. That is a considerable parcel of public property.

Are Federal agencies prepared and equipped to provide the special kind of management that a large wilderness system requires? Are universities providing resource managers of today and tomorrow with particular wilderness skills and training? Does public policy recognize the need for wilderness management, and identify the most efficient ways and means to make it work? These and related questions were addressed at the First National Wilderness Management Workshop, conducted at Moscow, Idaho, on October 4-6, 1983, under the auspices of the Wilderness Research Center of the University of Idaho. The theme of the workshop was "Taking Care of What We've Got."





The workshop responded to a growing sense of public concern that wilderness faces serious pressures of use and overuse. Nearly 400 participants from all parts of the country gave their input through seminars and working group sessions. Their expressions on critical issues, conflicts, and solutions were tabulated and classified and then sent to them for review. A three-month public involvement program was also conducted to reach the interested public, to provide others the opportunity to participate in the process.

Thus, officials of Federal agencies from bureau chiefs to field managers have been involved. So have outfitters, concessioners, and public and private commercial recreation interests; commodity production interests with legal rights to operate in wilderness or concerns with it; public and private fish and wildlife organizations; citizen organizations active in wildland recreation, conservation and preservation; and research and educational institutions.

In his concluding remarks at the workshop, Forest Service Chief R. Max Peterson called for the Federal land management agencies to work with representatives of user groups to develop a *Five-Year Wilderness Management Action Program* based on the wealth of ideas generated at the conference. He asked the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences of the University of Idaho to facilitate the process.

As a consequence of the workshop, a national steering committee was established. The purpose of the committee was to pull together the ideas generated by the workshop participants into an action plan articulated into feasible, practical, and adaptable recommendations.

The steering committee prepared a draft Five-Year Management Action Program to deal with the most important issues and recommendations emerging from the workshop. This draft program was distributed to all participants and others interested in wilderness management. Over 200 responses were received and analyzed by the University using content analysis procedures. From this data the steering committee developed the following final recommended Wilderness Management Action Program and Summary of Priority Actions.

The program recommended by the steering committee is based on the data of the management workshop and public review. Three issues it does not address are:

- It does not deal with allocation of additional wilderness, which is considered a separate issue, but focuses attention on "taking care of what we've got."
- It does not propose additional legislation, believing that existing directives to protect and perpetuate wilderness are broad and clear.
- It does not treat management funding as an issue, but considers wilderness management actions per se deserving priority inclusion in any current or projected budget.

The recommended actions that follow are priority guidelines for the next five years.

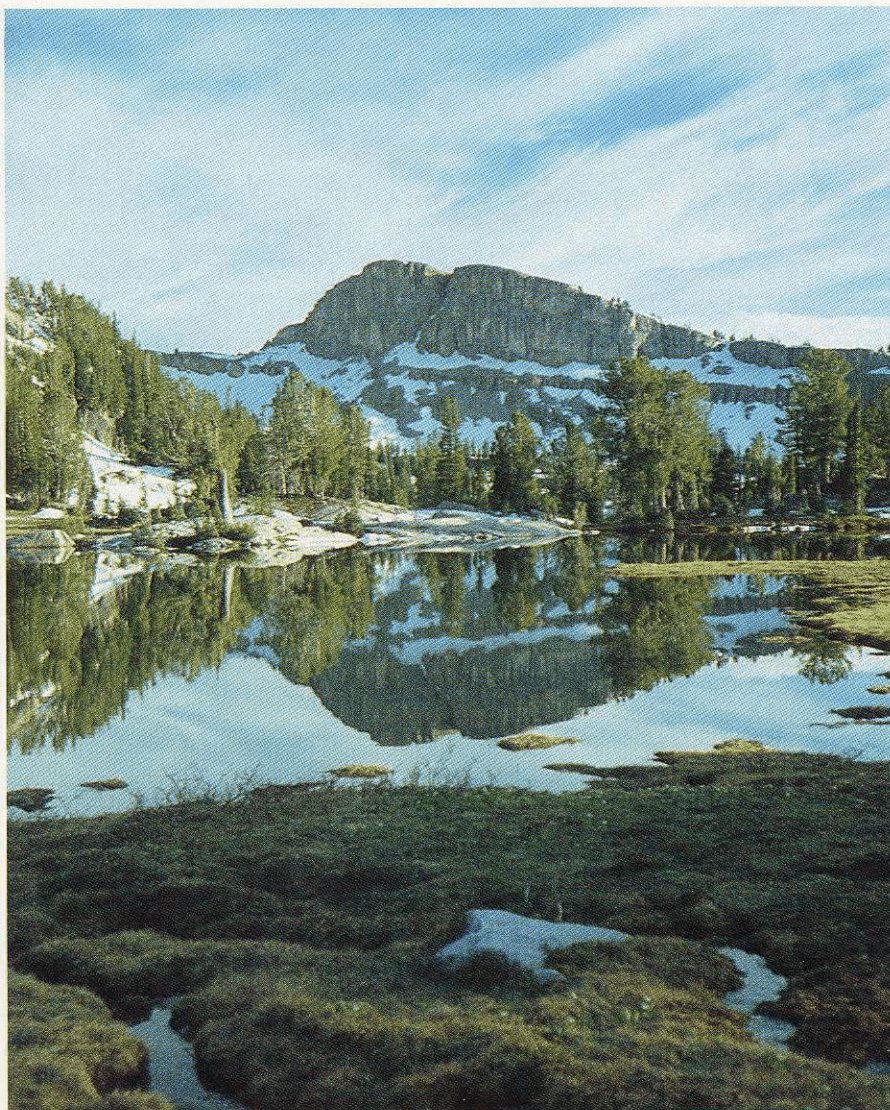


# FIVE-YEAR WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT ACTION PROGRAM

## I

### Educating the Public

Successful plans and programs for resource management are wholly dependent on public understanding and acceptance. Forestry, Gifford Pinchot declared many years ago, cannot succeed without support of the people who are forest neighbors. So it is with wilderness: as popularity rises and visitors come from nearby and afar, public understanding is essential to achieve respect for the resource, restraint, and willingness to adhere to appropriate uses. Such public understanding in many cases provides the desirable alternative to imposition of regulations and restrictions.



### Recommended Actions:

- Examine existing wilderness education techniques and evaluate their effectiveness. Be sure wilderness education material defines the wilderness resource and its values.
- Provide to the public at large useful interpretive materials on wilderness values and ethics and the opportunity for the public to join in management through appropriate use. Reach the vicarious wilderness public as well as the constant user.
- Develop jointly and distribute to the public education materials on no-trace camping and other means of maintaining wilderness values.
- Develop a list of wilderness and no-trace camping education materials offered by all agencies and involved publics. Compile an index of available material and disseminate.
- Endeavor to enlist national, regional and local media in shedding light on wilderness management issues and options before the public.
- Enlist employees of outfitters, concessioners, and commercial recreation firms to exercise responsibility on their part as trainers of the public they guide and serve.









# II

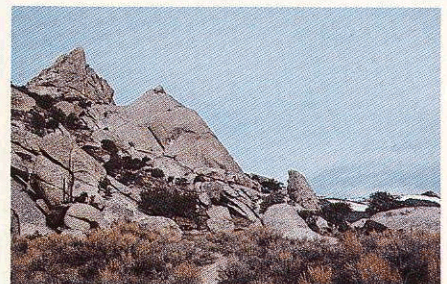
## Education and Training of Managers

Workshop participants identified this issue as critical. Many federal agency personnel lack adequate background and expertise in wilderness management to fulfill responsibilities implicit in the Wilderness Act. Good work is being done, but it needs to be recognized and broadened.



### Recommended Actions:

- Institute and revitalize comprehensive in-service wilderness management training, focused on the value of the wilderness resource, wilderness ethics, and low-impact camping, utilizing both agency and nonagency expertise.
- Conduct workshops and other programs, nationally, regionally, and locally, as cooperative ventures of agencies, educational institutions, and interest groups in order to share ideas, concerns, and techniques relating to wilderness management.
- Include wilderness management as a course in university natural resource curricula. Establish a basic course on wilderness as a resource, including management of visitors. Encourage accrediting groups (like the Society of American Foresters) to include it in their curricula requirements.
- Each agency should systematically identify management personnel who would benefit from additional training in wilderness management.





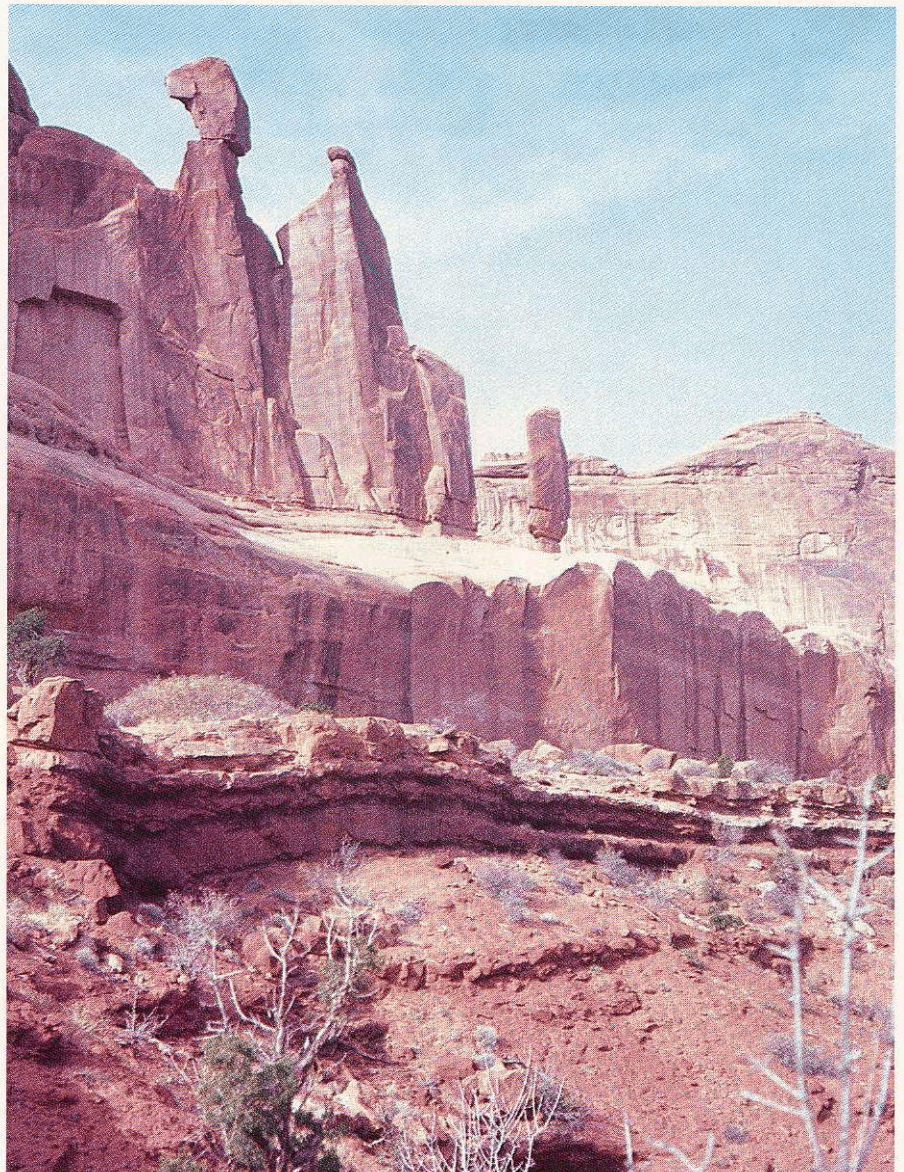
## Recommended Actions:

- Set specific wilderness management objectives, giving priority to alleviating areas of concentrated overuse. Include "limits of acceptable change" (LAC) or similar principles as integral components of wilderness management plans.
- Test varied approaches to resource rehabilitation and alleviation of overuse, and report evaluations of those approaches.
- Establish a computer library of wilderness training, education programs, and management techniques, such as handling concentrated use, data collection, monitoring, and rehabilitation.
- Conduct research and development to establish procedures to modify undesirable behavior with the least impact on the quality of the visitors' wilderness experience.

## III

### Capacity and Concentrated Use

Are visitors "loving wilderness to death?" Many areas clearly show signs of trampling, erosion and ecological damage. Yet where use is restricted other problems are likely to arise, including impingement on personal freedom and conflicts in quotas allocated to the outfitted public versus the nonoutfitted public. Nevertheless, for wilderness to be wild it must be sustained as a healthy ecosystem, and to be enjoyed as wild must be free of overuse.





# IV

## Interagency Coordination and Consistency

The four federal agencies directly involved in administration of wilderness have legislatively been assigned different missions. But the Wilderness Act of 1964 generally brings them together, under one national wilderness preservation system, established by Congress. Coordination and consistency within as well as among agencies (within the law's direction for each agency) are imperatives—in managing nonconforming uses authorized by prior use or by specific exemption by law; in dealing with areas with adjacent boundaries; and in sustaining the principles and philosophy of the Act.

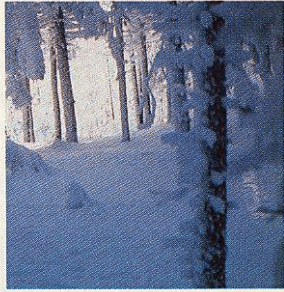


### Recommended Actions:

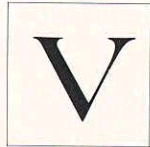
- Wherever possibilities exist, develop joint plans for wilderness units crossing administrative boundaries, whether intraagency (as with adjoining National Forests) or interagency (e.g., adjoining National Park, Forest Service, or BLM units); adjust administrative boundaries where feasible to promote consistency and reduce management costs.
- Continue to develop and improve interagency wilderness management training programs.
- Coordinate communication among agencies on wilderness management.
- At the end of five years, convene a task force to review implementation of the Management Action Program.





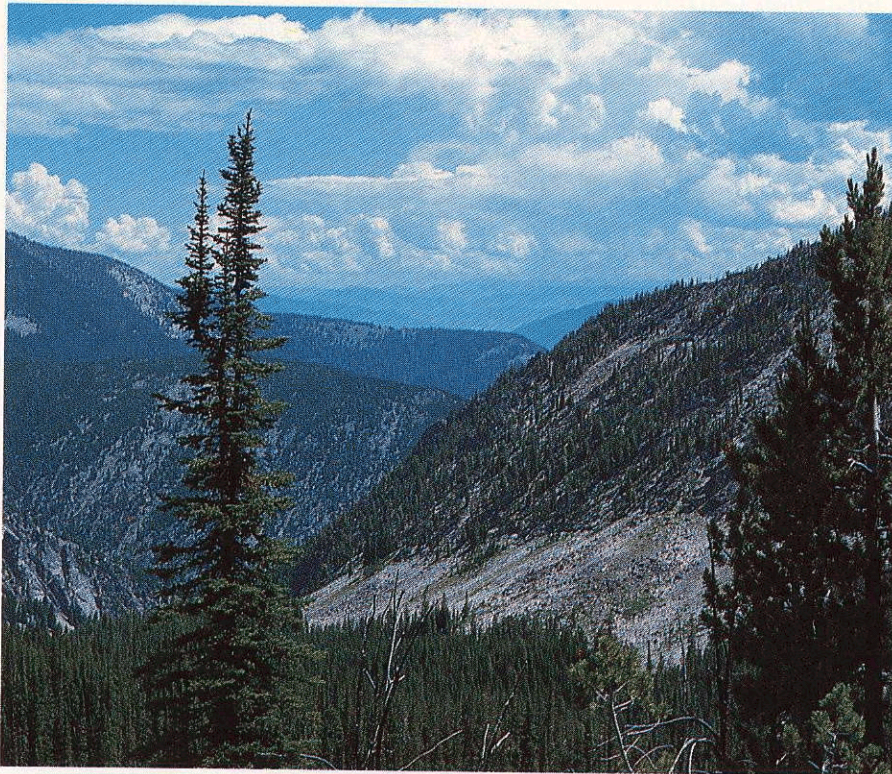






## Wilderness Management Practices

Wilderness by its very nature requires a different approach than lands managed for other purposes, or even specifically for recreation. The perpetuation of the wilderness resource and its natural processes must come first. Wilderness management also requires attention to what happens around its boundaries and often extensively beyond them as well, recognizing that Congress has clearly ruled out buffer zones around wilderness.



### Recommended Actions:

- Identify, monitor, and publicly report internal and external threats to wilderness values from whatever source, whether overuse, acid rain, other forms of degraded air quality, visual or sound impairments.
- Manage indigenous plant and animal communities to sustain natural processes, assuring that levels of human use are compatible rather than detrimental, with emphasis on preserving endangered and threatened species, as required by law.
- Direct attention in planning to activities on both sides of wilderness boundaries, encouraging sensitivity to management goals, enhancement, and blending of diverse resources.
- Provide for and emphasize recreation opportunities outside wilderness.
- Upgrade public involvement in preparing wilderness management plans and in monitoring implementation of these plans.







## SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

Out of these 23 recommended actions, the steering committee chose the following five as the most important. These five will be crucial to improving wilderness management in the next five years.

- Examine existing wilderness education techniques and evaluate their effectiveness. Be sure wilderness education material defines the wilderness resource and its values.
- Institute and revitalize comprehensive in-service wilderness management training, focused on the value of the wilderness resource, wilderness ethics, and low-impact camping, utilizing both agency and nonagency expertise.
- Identify, monitor, and publicly report internal and external threats to wilderness values from whatever source, whether overuse, acid rain, other forms of degraded air quality, visual or sound impairments.
- Manage indigenous plant and animal communities to sustain natural processes, assuring that levels of human use are compatible rather than detrimental, with emphasis on preserving endangered and threatened species, as required by law.
- Conduct workshops and other programs, nationally, regionally, and locally, as cooperative ventures of agencies, educational institutions, and interest groups in order to share ideas, concerns, and techniques relating to wilderness management.







## CONCLUSION

The Five-Year Action Program presented in this booklet is the result of the first extensive public involvement process in wilderness management history. Contents of the action plan will be presented to the four federal agencies at the national level for inclusion in their various programs.

The program will also be distributed to the 400 workshop participants, public and private interest groups, and others upon request. The steering committee strongly encourages wilderness users and interest groups to also include action items listed in this booklet into their programs during the next five years.

The long-term goal of efficient wilderness management will best be served if this Action Program is regarded as a beginning. At the end of five years, a task force should convene, evaluate what has been accomplished, and set new priority guidelines.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

**Edmund E. Bloedel**, *Wilderness Management Specialist, United States Forest Service*

**Arnold Bolle**, *Vice President, The Wilderness Society*

**William J. Briggie**, *Deputy Regional Director, National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region*

**Bonnie Christie**, *Conservation Director, Appalachian Mountain Club*

**Arnold "Smoke" Elser**, *Outfitter and Past President, Professional Wilderness Outfitters and Guides Association*

**Michael Frome**, *Visiting Associate Professor, Department of Wildland Recreation Management, University of Idaho*

**Joyce M. Kelly**, *Chief, Division of Recreation, Cultural, and Wilderness Resources, Bureau of Land Management*

**Edwin E. Krumpe**, *Steering Committee Chairman and Director, Wilderness Research Center, University of Idaho*

**Maynard Miller**, *State Geologist and Dean of the College of Mines and Earth Resources, University of Idaho*

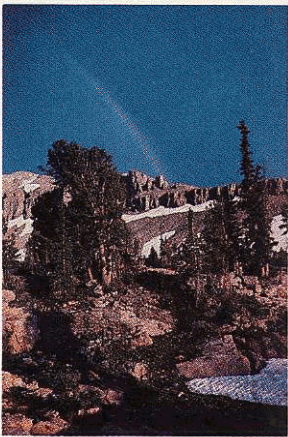
**Marvin Plenert**, *Director of Refuges, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver Regional Office*

**Roger Williams**, *Chief, Program Coordination, Idaho Department of Fish and Game*













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**Bureau of Land Management**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Forest Service**

**National Park Service**